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Tentative Title of the Thesis

"A Study on Consumer perception and buying behaviour towards Eco-Friendly products in Latur district of Maharashtra"

Research Proposal submitted in Partial fulfilment of registration to PH.D. Programme.

In the Subject

Commerce, Faculty of Commerce and Management.

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Introduction:

The National and International markets today are catered by the large and complex modern businesses. In recent times, people are changing their lifestyle and shifting towards greener ways. Marketing can be seen as an important instrument to sell new lifestyles and modify overall consumption habits. The demand for green products is increasing day by day. The marketers today are required to maintain clean and healthy environment voluntarily, as a part of Social responsibility of the business. Hence, he has to take necessary initiatives to prevent all types of pollution. The Government has also offered fiscal relief and concessions to encourage industrial units to undertake all pollution control measures.

Green marketing is inevitable for present situation. It refers to the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe. Green marketing has emerged as a critical perspective in India as in different parts of the developing world, and is viewed as the imperative system of encouraging sustainable advancement. Marketers' today use myriads of terms to convey the green value of their products and services and they use "eco-friendly" or "green" as an umbrella term to define anything that is 100% natural, organic, recyclable and not detrimental to the environment and earth.

Today the term eco-friendly is widespread and most appealing word within the population across the globe. Both the consumer and business organizations are facing the challenges of preserving the natural resources of the planet along with the environment, especially the consumers are taking environmental concerns seriously and are taking essential steps to establish ecological balance by practicing Green consumption behaviour.
The messages are being promoted as REDUCE, RE-CYCLE and RE-USE. Hence Eco-Friendly products are seen as a solution today for providing an eco-friendly environment.

Review of Literature:

1. Elangovan et al (2006) in their article on **Consumers attitude towards green marketing: an exploratory study** analyzed that consumers have a strong positive attitude towards green marketing. Companies which can establish themselves with green image will have distinctive advantage in the market place. Consumers are more aware of environmental issues. Consumer preferences have shifted from grey (non-green products) to green products. In future more and more consumers will prefer green products. Consumers are increasingly better informed and becoming aware of the environmental impact of consumer products.

2. Cheal & Phau, (2010) in their study **green consumption with a focus on sustainable lifestyle** examined that green consumption can be correlated with environmentalactions shown by the consumers (Gilg, Barr, & Ford (2010) Young, Hwang, McDonald,& Oates (2010) studied the relationship between the purchasing of green products withthat of traditional consumer products and a gap was found between attitude of consumers and their actions towards purchasing of green products. The study reportedthat 30% of the consumers had shown concern towards environmental problems but they struggle in translating it into the purchase of green products.
3. Ishaswini and Dutta (2011) researched the Indian consumers' awareness about green products and pro-environmental concerns are indicative of the buying behaviour of consumers. In their study, 98% of respondents were aware of eco-friendly products and 95% were aware of the fact that purchasing eco-friendly products will contribute towards a sustainable future. The results also pointed out that consumer buy the products that are eco-friendly but were unsure about the quality.
4. Ajay Kumar Sigh and Monika Bansal (2012) in their paper **Green Marketing and its impact on Consumer Behaviour** focus on establishing a relationship between consumer purchasing decision and green marketing, developing marketing mix for consumers as well as highlighting the challenges being faced by companies pursuing green marketing. Primary data was collected from 50 consumers of Delhi and NCR Region. It was found that consumers are environment conscious but it does not affect their purchasing decision.
5. Jacob Cherian and Jolly Jacob (2012) in their article **Green Marketing: A Study of Consumers Attitude towards Environment Friendly Products** made an attempt to understand to understand the concept of Green Marketing and to review some of the studies that have dealt with the concept of Green Marketing and to identify the relationship between the various consumer attitude and green marketing. It was concluded that there is still lack of green knowledge among consumers but scenario is changing. Many consumers have started realizing the importance of green products and are willing to pay little extra amount towards green products.
6. Mayank Bhatia and Amit Jain (2013) published a paper entitled **Green Marketing: A study of consumer perception and preferences in India.** This article focus on the perception and preferences of consumers towards green marketing, measure the green values of the customers, identify brands, consumer association with green marketing

practices, factors influencing consumer persuasion and to understand the issues and challenges of green marketing. Data was collected through questionnaire filled up by 10 consumers. Consumer strongly agreed with manufacturing eco-friendly products as the most important green marketing practices with the mean score of 4.67. Consumers are concerned about the protection of the environment and are ready to pay premium money. It was concluded that purchasing intention of green products is affected by green consumer values, green product awareness and perception regarding seriousness of green marketers.

7. Ali Raza Hamid (2015) in his article **A study on the relationship between consumer attitude, perceived value and green products** states that a positive attitude towards green products resulting from a higher perceived value, the products proclaimed as green should incorporate the worth which consumers value the most while purchasing. The main objective is the relationship between attitude, perceived value and green products. The researcher concluded that the green products are not among consumer's priorities. As green products are probably considered costly, their perceived value is low; therefore, consumers have not shown a significant amount of confidence. He recommended that our society, people, educated or not, do not positively weigh green products as important and are not inclined towards building a better ecological understanding. The environment as a subject should be introduced and included in curriculum at primary and secondary school levels.
8. Kong et al. (2014) surveyed 159 people aged above 18 years and found that green corporate perception, eco-labels, and green product value can positively affect people's intention for purchasing green products. However, people's intention is not influenced by green packaging and green advertising.
9. Maheshwari (2014) surveyed female respondents from Madhya Pradesh to determine if their awareness of green marketing can influence consumer green buying behavior (GBB). The results showed that consumers always prefer those brands with environmentally-friendly products as they feel good when buying such products. But there are not enough communications about green products so that customers are not even able to recognize such products. So, marketers must take some measures to enhance the consumer awareness of Green Marketing.
10. Agyeman (2014) argued that there is a positive relationship between the factors and consumer buying behaviour for green products. He said that quality and price of the product and environmental concerns play a vital role when it comes to actual purchase

of the green products. He recommended that green marketers should make strategies after the proper understanding of the segment market and plan marketing mix strategies accordingly.

11. Dr. Seema Laddha and Prof. Mayur Malviya (2015) conducted a small survey of 150 samples from Navy Mumbai. Questions related to Environment and buying behaviour were asked to the respondents. The survey revealed that that there is growing concerns about environment and increasing. It is revealed that Indian consumers' pro-environmental concerns, knowledge of environmental issues, awareness of eco-friendly products, and educational levels effect on green buying behaviour. The awareness about the products should be done through advertising so that individual buying behaviour can be changed which can have an impact on the welfare of the environment. It is also important that companies aiming at developing new ecofriendly products should ensure that products perform competitively. Green marketing is still in its infancy and a lot of research is to be done on green marketing to fully explore its potential.
12. Rakesh H M and P. Lakshmi (2015) studied **green marketing and its impact on consumer behavior.** The consumers are aware of the environmental issues like global warming and the impact of environmental pollution. The Green marketing is a phenomenon which has formed the particular interest in the modern market and has emerged as an essential concept in India. This study has attempted to understand the concept of green marketing and the behaviour of the consumer towards green products. Data were collected through structured questionnaire from 80 respondents.
13. Dr. B. Nagaraju and Thejaswini H.D (2016) in their article on Consumer attitude towards eco-friendly FMCG products with reference to Hubli city in Maharashtra stated following findings: Majority of the consumers are aware of the eco-friendly FMCG products and are having a positive attitude towards eco- friendly FMCG products. Product label and outdoor advertisement are major sources of awareness towards eco-friendly products. Lack of knowledge and not aware of the benefits are barriers for purchasing eco-friendly products. Consumers buy eco-friendly products for health purpose. The government, organizations and consumers have to join their hands for successful green marketing.
14. Prabusankar (2016) indicated that there was a significant difference between the socio-economic profile of consumers and their perception of eco-friendly products. The results showed that safety was positively and significantly influencing on purchase intentions of consumers for eco-friendly products followed by quality, healthiness, and

worthiness. This indicated that consumers were excited to buy eco-friendly products due to their safety, healthiness, and quality.

15. Ali and Amir (2016) found a significant correlation between consumer's general environmental beliefs and consumer confidence in green products but no correlation was found between general environment beliefs and consumer behaviour which shows a value action gap. The study also revealed that marketing of green products is not as affective in making people aware about them but it was found that people will prefer products of companies that are environment friendly and have good image in this regard.
16. Green marketing and green consumption behaviors were examined in a thesis by Pleming (2016) who addressed the following research questions: 1) How do consumers interpret their green consumption behavior in their everyday lives despite their limited knowledge of the subject? 2) What motivates people to purchase green products? 3) What are the barriers to this behavior? The answers revealed that green marketing practices increased green consumption and was dependent on consumers' enthusiasm to engage in green practices and green behavioral influences. Suggestions for future research highlighted the need for a qualitative research to provide rich insights into relationships between consumer behavior, green marketing and green consumption. By introducing social practice theory into the marketing discipline, knowledge and understanding would have a stronger foundation.
17. N. Anil Kumar and Dr. Mridanish Jha (2017) indicated that price, quality, value, trust and easy to use are the factors that affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. There is significant difference between socio-economic profile of consumers and factors affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products except gender of consumers and factors affecting buying behaviour of consumers for eco-friendly products. The regression analysis shows that price, quality, easy to use, value and trust have significant and positive impact on satisfaction of consumers towards eco-friendly products.
18. Rakesh Dondapat and S.Rabiyathul Basariya (2019) indicated that people are willing to purchase eco-friendly FMCG products provided they should be convinced with the eco-friendly nature of the product and the price should not be too high compared to the conventional products.

19. Mikhaela B. Azarcon et al (2022) in their article on **Going Green: Factors Influencing Green Purchase Intention** found that environmental knowledge and environmental attitude and concern influence green purchase intention. With this, an implication for products associated with green, eco-friendly, and sustainability is that eco-labels may be an indispensable marketing mechanism for encouraging green consumption by customers.

Statement of Problem:

This study focuses on customer's perception and buying behaviour in relation to eco- friendly FMCG products specifically including Eco-Friendly home care products, Eco-friendly personal care products and Eco–Friendly electrical goods. It starts from the assumption that environmental problems are closely related to individual customer perception and behaviour, and that individual customer behaviour is one of the major causes for the existing environmental problems. Without substantial changes in the long term these consumption practices present a serious threat to the environment and to society as a whole.

The concept of Environmental marketing is fairly young and as a result it has not been extensively explored. The green consumers are the main motivating force behind the Environmental Marketing process. Consumers' feelings, belief, behaviour etc. are important in analysing the Eco-friendly products. Therefore, this study has paid attention to consumers' attitudes which has helped to generate an opinion on the subject: "Consumers' perception and buying behaviour towards Eco-friendly FMCG products with reference to Latur District"

Universe and Sample

Eco-friendly FMCG users in Latur district are the universe of the study. From among the universe 200 users will be surveyed. Convenient sampling technique will be used for collecting data. It is kind of non-probability sampling in which data would be collected which is convenient. It is not possible to collect the data from all the users of eco-friendly FMCG in Latur district, so major towns in the district will be selected for the data collection and Google formmethod will be used as well. Advantage of this sampling technique is that data will be assembled quickly.

Data and Analysis Tools

Primary Data

A structured questionnaire will be the main tool for collecting primary data. It will be administered on the eco-friendly FMCG users to gather data to meet the objectives of the study.

Secondary Data

Relevant and reliable secondary data will be collected from various journals, government publications, published reports, etc. Current data will be gathered through websites.

Statistical Tools

In the study, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) will be used to analyse the data for sample description and description statistics. Chi-Square, ANOVA, Regression, Correlation analysis, Mann-Whitney U Test & Kruskal- Wallis Test will be done to analyse data.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study the growth FMCG Industry in India
2. To study the eco-friendly concerns of FMCG industry
3. To study the green marketing practice initiatives undertaken by FMCG companies
4. To study the association between the demographic variables and the intention to purchase eco-friendly FMCG products
5. To examine the perception of the users of eco-friendly FMCG products
6. To assess and evaluate the extent of consumer awareness towards eco-friendly FMCG products with respect to the demographical factors.
7. To evaluate the level of satisfaction which the consumer derives from Eco-friendly products.

Chapter Scheme:

Chapter 1. Introduction and Research Design

Chapter 2. Review of Literature and Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3. Perception and Buying behavior of users of Eco-Friendly FMCG products –An Analysis.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5. Findings of the Study and Recommendations

Limitations of the Study:

1. The study only focuses on the users of Eco-Friendly FMCG products in Latur district of Maharashtra.
2. The study only focuses on eco-friendly FMCG products and hence the results may notbe generalized.

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Research Guide

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